

M A N I T O B A) Order No. 11/13
)
THE PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD ACT) January 29, 2013

BEFORE: Régis Gosselin, MBA, CGA, Chair
Raymond Lafond, BA, CMA, FCA, Member
Marilyn Kapitany, B.Sc. (Hon), M.Sc., Member

STITTCO UTILITIES MAN LTD.
PROPANE RATES EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 1, 2013

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By this Order, the Public Utilities Board (Board) approves, on an interim *ex parte* basis, a 1.2% increase in the propane commodity rate for Stittco Utilities Man Ltd. effective for propane consumed on or after February 1, 2013.

The table below compares propane commodity rates and delivery charges over the last year:

	Feb 1/12	May 1/12	Aug 1/12	Nov 1/12	Feb 1/13
Basic Monthly Charge	\$10.00/mo	\$10.00/mo	\$10.00/mo	\$10.00/mo	\$10/mo
	per m ³	per m ³	per m ³	per m ³	per m ³
Commodity Cost Recovery	\$1.47	\$1.0642	\$0.6000	\$0.9136	\$0.9249
Delivery charge (Non-Commodity Charge)					
First 100 m3	\$1.14	\$1.14024	\$1.20122	\$1.20122	\$1.20122
Next 400 m3	\$1.02	\$1.01691	\$1.07129	\$1.07129	\$1.07129
Next 1000 m3	\$0.96	\$0.96223	\$1.01371	\$1.01371	\$1.01371
Next 2500 m3	\$0.78	\$0.77963	\$0.82131	\$0.82131	\$0.82131
Over 4000 m3	\$0.60	\$0.59809	\$0.63006	\$0.63006	\$0.63006

Commodity rates are adjusted every quarter in accordance with the quarterly rate setting (QRS) process approved by the Board in Orders 141/08 and 45/09 (available for review on the Board's website). Interim commodity Orders are reviewed and finalized annually, typically when Stittco files its annual non-commodity rate application.

Commodity rates can represent approximately half of the average annual residential bill depending on propane costs; the

remainder of the costs are non-commodity costs such as distribution and administrative costs.

The 1.2% commodity rate increase is a result of a small market price decrease in the cost of the propane commodity (from \$204/m³ for liquid propane in current rates to \$191/m³), and a decrease in the purchase price variance account balance (from \$243,153 in current rates to \$141,090) owing to customers.

The commodity rate increase is expected to increase the average overall residential propane bill by approximately 0.5% when non-commodity costs are included.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The commodity portion of Stittco's overall propane rates is amended quarterly, in accordance with the QRS process. Non-commodity costs, or delivery charges, are set annually and are designed to recover the costs incurred by Stittco for the distribution of propane to customers. Delivery charges were recently amended in Board Order No. 88/12 for propane consumed after August 1, 2012.

Commodity costs, including transportation to Thompson, are passed on to customers with no mark-up. Prices of the purchased commodity may vary because of market conditions; they may be higher or lower than price levels established by Board Order. The differences are tracked in a Purchased Price Variance Account (PPVA), and either refunded to or collected from customers in subsequent rate settings. Regular adjustments to commodity prices help to minimize balances in this account and buffer often large swings in commodity charges.

Rates established by the QRS are set on an interim *ex parte* basis, subject to satisfactory information being filed by Stittco with the Board. The quarterly interim rates are reviewed and finalized annually through a public process (either by way of a paper review or oral hearing) when Stittco files their annual non-commodity rate application.

The interim *ex parte* (without notice as Stittco is not giving notice to anyone other than the Board) rate approval process reduces regulatory costs.

3.0 APPLICATION

Stittco filed its application on January 15, 2013, seeking an increase in commodity rates from \$0.9136/m³ to \$0.9249/m³ of propane vapour. The commodity rate reflects Stittco's forecast propane commodity price of \$191.00/m³ of liquid propane (a decrease from \$204 reflected in current rates), plus an additional \$70/m³ for delivery to Thompson. Stittco's application also included an adjustment to the propane commodity cost reflecting a PPVA balance of \$141,090.00 owing to the customer (a decrease from \$243,153 owing to customer reflected in current rates).

It is largely the change in the PPVA from \$243,153 to \$141,090.00 owing to the customer that increased Stittco's overall propane revenue requirement from \$1.515 million in current rates to \$1.534 million in proposed commodity rates effective February 1, 2013. This slight increase in propane revenue requirement results in a slight increase in the propane commodity rate.

4.0 BOARD FINDINGS

The commodity recovery rate sought by Stittco fairly reflects projected commodity and transportation costs to Thompson. The Board will direct that the propane commodity rate be increased effective for propane consumed on or after November 1, 2012.

Propane remains an expensive fuel for heating purposes in comparison to other options. The Board continues to recommend that customers seek ways to upgrade the heating efficiency of their premises, so as to reduce propane consumption and resulting costs, and to consider other heating options such as converting to electric heat or geothermal. The cost of heating an average residential dwelling by propane, using a conventional propane furnace, is approximately two times the average cost of heating by electricity.

Board decisions may be appealed in accordance with the provisions of Section 58 of *The Public Utilities Board Act*, or reviewed in accordance with Section 36 of the Board's Rules of Practice and Procedure (Rules). The Board's Rules may be viewed on the Board's website at www.pub.gov.mb.ca.

5.0 IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:

Stittco Utilities Man Ltd.'s rates be amended on an interim *ex parte* basis as per the attached Schedule "A" effective for consumption on or after February 1, 2013.

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD

"RÉGIS GOSSELIN, MBA, CGA"
Chair

"KURT SIMONSEN, P.ENG."
Acting Secretary

Certified a true copy of Order No.
11/13 issued by The Public
Utilities Board

Acting Secretary

SCHEDULE "A"
GENERAL SERVICE RATE STRUCTURE
EFFECTIVE FOR CONSUMPTION ON OR AFTER FEBRUARY 1, 2013

Basic Monthly Charge		\$10.00/month
		per m ³ /mo
Commodity Costs Recovery		0.9249
Delivery Charge:		
	First 100 m3	1.20122
	Next 400 m3	1.07129
	Next 1000 m3	1.01371
	Next 2500 m3	0.82131
	Over 4000 m3	0.63006